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Peacebuilding Commission
Second session
Guinea-Bissau configuration

Report of the mission of the Peacebuilding Commission to Guinea-Bissau

23-25 January 2008

I. Background

1. At the first meeting of the Guinea-Bissau configuration, on 21 January 2008, the Chairperson of the Guinea-Bissau configuration reiterated her intention to undertake a field visit to Guinea-Bissau. The visit to Guinea-Bissau took place from 23 to 25 January 2008. The Chairperson was accompanied by staff of the Peacebuilding Support Office of the United Nations Secretariat. The main purposes of the exploratory mission were (a) to initiate a dialogue with the Government of Guinea-Bissau with a view to learning about the situation and the priorities for peacebuilding in the country; (b) to discuss with the Government and other stakeholders the country's main peacebuilding issues and challenges; and (c) to explain the processes and purpose of engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission with the country.

2. In the discussions with various stakeholders, the Chairperson explained that the Commission was established to offer support for peacebuilding efforts in countries emerging from conflict. That support consisted of bringing all relevant actors together, marshalling resources for and maintaining sustained international attention on the countries on the agenda of the Commission. A strategic or cooperation framework would be developed as part of the engagement between the Commission and Guinea-Bissau. The Chairperson explained that national ownership was key to both the engagement and the development of the strategic framework. She also conveyed the suggestion to combine medium and long-term strategies with short-term measures that could bring immediate relief for the population.

3. During the visit, the Chairperson had a discussion with the Prime Minister and met the Foreign Minister, the Secretary of State for International Cooperation, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of the Economy, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of the Interior, the Minister of Defence, the Minister of the Presidency, the Army Chief of Staff, representatives of civil society organizations, members of the

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diplomatic community resident in or accredited to Guinea-Bissau, and the United Nations country team.

4. The report has been organized around the categories of stakeholders with whom the Chairperson interacted. The composition of the delegation is contained in annex I; the programme of the visit is contained in annex II.

II. Government

5. The Government ministers and senior officials who met the Chairperson expressed deep appreciation for the decision of the Commission to place Guinea-Bissau on its agenda. They also welcomed the timeliness of the visit by the Chairperson of the Guinea-Bissau configuration. They conveyed their gratitude to the Government of Brazil for agreeing to chair the Guinea-Bissau configuration. Emphasizing that peacebuilding was essential to post-conflict recovery, growth and development, they expressed the hope that the engagement of the Government of Guinea-Bissau with the Commission would yield significant dividends for the people of Guinea-Bissau. They also noted that Guinea-Bissau had gone through a period of instability which had led to slow economic growth, loss of technical expertise and diminished international confidence in the country. Still, they emphasized that the country had much potential, which was why it needed international support to enable it to launch on a path of political stability, sustained economic growth and development.

6. Achieving political stability was vital to creating an enabling environment for peace and prosperity and restoring international confidence. In that regard, particular emphasis was placed on security sector reform, which was launched on 23 January 2008. The security sector reform programme had three components: (a) reforming the armed forces; (b) strengthening the security forces; and (c) modernizing the justice sector. The Government had developed a strategy document for the restructuring and modernization of the defence and security sector. The document estimated that the Government would require the sum of $184.3 million for the reform of the three components of the sector. Some of the key components of the security sector reform programme included (a) providing infrastructure for the armed forces; (b) modernizing and restructuring the armed forces, in particular equipping them to patrol air space, secure maritime borders and defend the land mass of the country; (c) improving the living conditions in the barracks and police stations; (d) improving the level of training for military and security personnel; (e) building capacity and enhancing efficiency in the justice sector; and (f) preparing a programme for the demobilization of military personnel and adequately compensating demobilized personnel.

7. It was stressed that the impending demobilization should not result in sending away soldiers who had served the country with devotion and distinction, without providing for their future. It was recalled that the security sector reform programme drawn up in 1977 did not provide adequate financial compensation for soldiers during that exercise. That made the demobilized soldiers at that time easy targets of recruitment into the various factions that fought the 1998-1999 civil conflict. The soldiers, who would be demobilized as a consequence of the new security sector reform programme should, therefore, not only be adequately trained for reinsertion into civilian life, but also be given adequate financial resources to start their own

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businesses. For that reason, it was suggested that the security sector reform process be implemented in tandem with initiatives aimed at triggering new economic activities in various sectors.

8. There was much emphasis on the need for public sector reform. That reflected the recognition that the current public administration was weak, impeding the Government's ability to deliver basis social services, manage the economy soundly and promote private-sector development. The main elements of public-sector reform were described as including reducing to 5,000 the size of the public-sector work force, which currently stood at over 20,000; improving public financial management through strict adherence to the minimum fiscal stability programme adopted in May 2007; improving the professional competence of the public sector through training and reforming public finance institutions, such as customs and other revenue-collecting entities; and strengthening the revenue collection system. Government officials noted with satisfaction the positive prospects for cooperation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and requested the assistance of the Commission in supporting its dialogue with relevant international financial institutions, particularly with regard to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) debt initiative. Regarding revenue generation, it was noted that the inability of the Government to regularly pay the public-sector salaries was due mainly to a weak tax base.

9. The low tax revenue was attributed to the lack of economic growth, which was a consequence of low production in the agricultural and fishery sectors and a stagnant industrial base. The weak performance of those two sectors was in turn attributed mainly to a lack of regular electric power. Therefore, providing a reliable supply of energy would be important for increasing production in the agricultural, industrial and commercial sectors. That was also mentioned in the context of programmes that could bring positive results on a short-term basis. For example, ongoing pilot projects to provide added value to cashew nut exports and produce clean energy from their by-products were welcomed as initiatives that could be further developed.

10. The burden of servicing the country's huge external debt was crippling the Government's ability to invest in public infrastructure. At the same time, in order to stimulate economic growth the Government was committed to creating an enabling business environment. In pursuance of that effort, the Government had undertaken various measures, including creating a sound legal and regulatory framework for business transactions; establishing a "one-stop shop" for reviewing, registering and approving the establishment of business enterprises; reducing the number of days for establishing businesses in the country; requesting technical assistance from partners to help draft new codes of investment for the country; revising the labour and employment laws of the country; and revising legislation to encourage public-private partnerships in the infrastructure sector. It was noted that economic growth was vital to generating wealth, creating employment opportunities, surmounting poverty and establishing the foundation for long-term sustainable peace.

11. Drug-trafficking was repeatedly emphasized as one of the new threats to political stability of the country. In the past few years, Guinea-Bissau had become a major transit point for drug trafficking, at a time when the Government lacked the financial, technical and administrative ability to detect and deter drug traffickers. In order to overcome the new threat, the Government had elaborated a plan and with

the help of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), had converted it to an operational plan. The Government hoped that the pledges made at the Lisbon Conference on Combating Drugs in Guinea-Bissau would help to address the problem of drug trafficking. For its part, the Government remained vigorously committed to fully implementing the plan. It was widely recognized that there was a need to strengthen State institutions, in particular the justice sector, with a view to assuring an effective combat against drug trafficking.

12. One theme that featured prominently and frequently in the course of discussions with Government ministers was the issue of huge deficits in the social sectors. That had several manifestations, including high illiteracy rates among youth and women; high unemployment among youth; poor medical services; lack of technical skills among the youth and low public investment in the health and education sectors. Considerable importance was placed on the need to generate employment opportunities for the youth and to prepare them for taking advantage of the economic opportunities through vocational training that would equip them with the necessary skills. One suggestion in that regard was that the Government should make a special effort to focus on capacity-building for vocational training. At the same time, there should be increased public investment in the health sector so as to increase access to basic health, especially preventive health care. Young people were a positive factor for change and no effort should be spared to enable them to participate actively in the economy and society.

13. The country was currently preparing for Parliamentary elections, tentatively scheduled for October-November 2008. The election was seen as an important element in the promotion of political stability and entrenchment of a democratic culture in the country. Some of the major activities planned in that regard included, voter registration, printing ballot papers and developing biometric identity data. The cost of elections in the 2008-2012 electoral cycle had been estimated at $8.6 million, of which only 7 per cent had been mobilized to date. The Government was mobilizing financial support, with the help of the United Nations system, for the elections.

III. Diplomatic community

14. The Chairperson held a meeting with the diplomatic community, consisting of the resident and accredited missions to Guinea-Bissau and regional organizations, including the Economic Community of West African States and the European Commission.

15. The members of the diplomatic community expressed support for the visit of the Chairperson and indicated that the moment to help Guinea-Bissau was the present time and not later. The involvement and engagement of the Commission with Guinea-Bissau was the most powerful symbol of the international community's commitment to support the country. International support for Guinea-Bissau had to be a joint effort among all members of the international community, including bilateral partners and multilateral institutions. Any assistance to the country, however, should not be burdened with too many conditions since the Government had neither the capacity nor the time to meet such conditions. Support for the country should also combine short-term actions with medium- and long-term

measures; in other words, the engagement of the country of the international community must be sustained.

16. There was recognition that Guinea-Bissau needed assistance on a range of issues but that political stability was essential for sustained and effective peacebuilding. However, frequent policy and personnel changes, as well as weak public administration capacity, had impeded the Government's absorptive capacity. In order for the Government to take full advantage of the support that the international community would provide, it was necessary to strengthen its public administration; deepen the national reconciliation process, which was essential to political stability; and create an environment conducive for private-sector growth.

17. The diplomatic representatives indicated the areas in which their Governments or organizations had provided support to the Government of Guinea-Bissau and would continue to provide assistance, including training doctors, nurses, medical technicians, police and the army; providing microcredit for women's programmes; working on demining action; supporting infant-feeding in schools; strengthening democracy; sanitizing public finance and fighting corruption; working with the military and the police to combat drug-trafficking; strengthening the rule of law; offering humanitarian assistance; building Government premises, primary schools and military barracks; and supporting the Government of Guinea-Bissau in promulgating the amnesty law for soldiers. It was stressed that the promulgation of the amnesty law was one of the factors that had made it possible for armed forces to embrace the security sector reform programme.

18. Given the increasing support being provided to Guinea-Bissau by many bilateral partners and multilateral institutions, the need for improved coordination among all international actors was emphasized. Strengthened coordination among the partners would enable the partners not only to avoid potential friction, while avoiding duplication, but also to offer assistance in a coherent manner enabling each partner to take on projects in areas in which they had particular expertise. To that effect, it suggested that the diplomatic community, including regional and subregional organizations, hold monthly meetings under the auspices of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS).

19. The representatives offered their perspectives on what they believed should be the key issues that the Commission should focus on in its engagement with Guinea-Bissau, including security sector reform; public-sector reform; assistance for the 2008 parliamentary and 2010 presidential elections; energy; combating drug-trafficking; supporting the agriculture, health and education sectors; and capacity-building for vocation training. They also emphasized the need for quick-impact projects as a way of making people feel immediate benefits from the engagement between the Government of Guinea-Bissau and the Commission. They emphasized that if security sector reform and drug-trafficking were not addressed quickly, they would undermine the modicum of stability that currently prevailed in the country. On the other hand, if there was no improvement in the delivery of basic social services, that would weaken public enthusiasm and support for the Government. Consequently, the efforts to make rapid progress in security sector reform must be matched with a corresponding commitment to make discernible improvements in the lives of the people through the provision of a reliable energy supply and the delivery of basic social services.

IV. Civil society organizations

20. The representatives of civil society organizations of Guinea-Bissau, encompassing the private sector, women's organizations, youth organizations, human rights groups and the West African Network for Peacebuilding, welcomed the opportunity to interact with the Chairperson of the Guinea-Bissau Configuration. The Chair also met separately with the Bishop of Bissau.

21. In the discussions, the representatives of civil society organizations emphasized that the problem of political instability in Guinea-Bissau was directly linked to the dismal economic situation in the country. Much attention was devoted to the huge problems in the sectors of education and health. The underlying sources of conflict were also traced to the lack of economic growth and employment opportunities. They explained that there was a link between security sector reform and development, noting that to obtain peace and security there had to be concerted efforts to fight poverty; in order to eradicate poverty there had to be economic growth; and in order to have growth there had to be well functioning and adequate infrastructure, most notably energy, which was essential for increasing production of goods and services.

22. Many factors had constrained growth and employment-generation in the country, including a lack of access to credit by the small-scale and medium-sized enterprises, notably among women; the difficulty that small and medium-sized operators had in getting their projects approved by banks, which increasingly asked for the translation of project documents into French in a Portuguese-speaking country; the lack of technical skills; and the length of time it took to get an enterprise registered and approved. Compounding the problem for the small enterprise operators, who were keen to break into the regional and global export markets, was the lack of marketing skills for exports — particularly of organic products — and the difficulty small business owners had in meeting internationally recognized exports standards. To overcome those problems, there was a need to launch projects devoted to vocational training, processing of local products and strengthening their technical knowledge of export marketing opportunities, as well as considering measures to promote access to microcredit.

23. In spite of the recent progress that had been made in increasing the number of women in the cabinet and legislation promoting gender equality, women continued to be particularly disadvantaged. They lacked economic power which made it difficult for them to run for elections — notably parliamentary elections; they had a high illiteracy rate; and they were disproportionately burdened by poverty. Even for literate and educated women, finding a job remained a difficult endeavour.

24. Significant emphasis was placed on the need to strengthen the rule of law as an integral component of the security sector reform. To date, however, more effort had been devoted to restructuring and modernization of the armed forces, to the neglect of the rule-of-law component. As the next election approached, it was vitally important to strengthen the rule of law in order to entrench democratic practice and tradition in the country. The importance of completing the electoral cycle by holding municipal elections was also highlighted. Two closely related concerns pertained to the need to deal with the problem of small arms and light weapons and drug-trafficking, which had grown in recent times.

25. Civil society organizations were committed to playing their part to strengthen political stability, promote economic dynamism and consolidate peace in the country. As such, civil society organizations were most eager to actively dialogue with the Commission as part of the broader engagement of the Commission with Guinea-Bissau with a view to delivering tangible results for peace. To have civil society actively contribute to the peacebuilding process, they asked for support in building their own implementation capacity. Civil society organizations, therefore, recommended that the Commission adopt an inclusive approach in articulating a peacebuilding framework or equivalent instrument in Guinea-Bissau.

V. The United Nations country team

26. The United Nations country team expressed satisfaction at the decision of the Commission to engage with Guinea-Bissau, which after several years of post-conflict situation is still marred by a number of structural problems, such as weak public administration capacity, resulting in the inability to deliver basic social services and inadequate financial re ›urces to pay for such services. The team observed that another major structural challenge was the lack of economic growth and fiscal revenue.

27. The lack of economic growth had led to a decline of employment opportunities, especially among the youth. At the same time, since only a mere 30 per cent of young people between the ages of 8 and 13 currently attended school, an even smaller percentage would attend secondary school. That has produced a vicious circle, in which the youth that should be preparing to enter the economy in the future would be less and less equipped with the skills to do so, while the current lack of growth removed the opportunities for those that had skills to participate. The growing youth unemployment in the country would potentially have destabilizing consequences. There was a strong belief that the country needed to pay special attention to the social sectors, in particular education and health. The country team took the view that while security sector reform might be important for political stability in the country, the social sectors merited special attention if the country was to be launched on the path of long-term growth and development.

28. An important element in promoting economic recovery and growth was the building of Government capacity in a range of sectors. One approach could be to strengthen such capacities by providing targeted training for specific functions. Such efforts should focus on strengthening the capacity of Government departments to articulate policies, formulate plans and implement relevant programmes that would enable the people to see and feel the benefits of peace. Special emphasis was placed on the need to deliver on what was described as "early peace dividends" projects, which should, however, be linked to ongoing development programmes. Developing projects for early peace dividends should benefit from the views of both the Government and civil society; in other words, engagement with civil society, who mostly operated at the grass-roots level, deserved the same attention as dialogue with Government leaders. As an illustration, one such project could contemplate the health sector; the lack of electricity in Bissau's hospital had been causing severe difficulties, sometimes with fatal consequences. Quick-impact projects, such as provision of a generator that required relatively modest resources, could be implemented to yield an immediate impact on the living conditions of the population.

29. It was also recognized that foreign direct investment was necessary in order to promote the diversification of the economy. That, in turn, would require the Government to regain the confidence of international partners, some of whom had expressed frustration in the past.

VI. Concluding observations

30. The engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission was being viewed as a turning point in the evolution of the political and economic transition in Guinea-Bissau and of the engagement of the international community with the country. The timing of the visit was most auspicious. It had come after the finalization of the country action programme by the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Population Fund for the implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2008-2012. It also coincided with the launching of the security sector reform programme in Parliament on 23 January 2008, the date the mission began. On 28 January 2008, the IMF Executive Board considered and approved emergency post-conflict assistance to Guinea-Bissau.

31. The visit had allowed the Chairperson to gain insights into, and perspectives on, the challenges confronting the country, including key issues in its peacebuilding efforts. The remainder of the present section focuses on three themes: (a) signs of hope and concerns; (b) expectations from the Government about the engagement of the Commission; and (c) key issues in peacebuilding.

32. There are many signs of hope in Guinea-Bissau that provide a solid platform for increasing international support for the country and for the engagement of the Commission with the Government, including the prevailing atmosphere of political stability; the commitment of the Government to security sector reform; the determination to reform the public sector; and the recognition that efforts have to be made to address the huge deficits in the social sector. Nonetheless, there are concerns about the capacity to effectively combat drug-trafficking, which is viewed as a new threat to political stability, and the capacity of the public sector to help the Government engage productively with the international community.

33. The discussion with Government leaders and senior officials revealed that they had very high expectations about the engagement with the Commission. In particular, the Government was keen for support in the areas that it highlighted as key issues in the country's peacebuilding efforts. The Government was looking forward to the engagement with the Commission as a catalyst for both increased international support and sustained international attention to meet the developmental needs of the country.

34. The interaction with various stakeholders, in particular with the Government, had highlighted a number of key issues for peacebuilding in the country, including security sector reform; public-sector reform, including sound fiscal management and paying public-sector wages; combating drug-trafficking; providing energy to help increase production in the various sectors of the economy; assistance for the forthcoming elections; capacity-building for vocational training of youth; and incentives for the reactivation of the economy. Ideally, those elements could be tackled in a combined and integrated manner, in close consultation with the

Government, which would ultimately define priorities and steer the work of the Commission.

35. A long-term strategy could be combined with a short-term approach through the identification of projects that could have an immediate impact on the living conditions of the people. Such projects could be conceived as a means of promoting economic activities, such as in the cashew nut sector; fostering political stability through, inter alia, contributions to the electoral process; providing further contributions to the fight against drug-trafficking and law-enforcement measures; and ameliorating the educational system in the country.

36. The Chairperson expressed appreciation to the Government of Guinea-Bissau and the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau and the United Nations country team for their support and assistance during the visit.

Annex I

Composition of the delegation

Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations and Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission Guinea-Bissau configuration

Alexandre Mendes Nina, First Secretary, Brazil

Ejeviome Eloho Otobo, Director Strategic Planning and Deputy Head, Peacebuilding Support Office of the United Nations Secretariat

Philip Helminger, Political Affairs Officer, Strategic Planning, Peacebuilding Support Office of the United Nations Secretariat

Annex II

Programme

Wednesday, 23 January

1205	Arrival in Bissau of Maria Luiza R. Viotti and Alexandre Mendes Nina
1215-1230	Meeting with Maria da Conceição Nobre Cabral, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guinea-Bissau
1430-1600	Meeting with Shola Omoregie, Representative of the Secretary-General in Guinea-Bissau, and Giuseppina Mazza, UNDP Resident Representative in Guinea-Bissau
1630-1730	Meeting with United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau and United Nations country team

Thursday, 24 January

0940-1030	Meeting with Roberto Ferreira Cachéu, Secretary of State for International Cooperation
1030-1130	Meeting with Certório Biote, Minister of the Interior
1145-1230	Meeting with Issufo Sanha, Minister of Finance
1245-1330	Meeting with Marciano Barbeiro, Minister of Defence
1330-1530	Civil society
1415-1430	Martinho Dafa Cabi,[a] Prime Minister
1620-1700	Meeting with Tagba Na Waie, Army Chief of Staff

Friday, 25 January

0915-1000	Meeting with Bishop Bissign of Guinea-Bissau
1010-1100	Meeting with Carmelita Pires, Minister of Justice
1100-1200	Meeting with Aboubacar Dahaba, Minister of Economy
1300-1500	Meeting with diplomatic missions
1515-1530	Meeting with Pedro da Costa, Minister of the Presidency
1625	Departure of Ms. Viotti and Mr. Mendes Nina

[a] Telephone conversation.

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Peacebuilding Commission
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Guinea-Bissau configuration

Report of the mission of the Peacebuilding Commission to Guinea-Bissau

6-11 April 2008

I. Background

1. A delegation of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission visited Guinea-Bissau from 6 to 11 April 2008. The purposes of the mission and key message, the full programme of the mission and the composition of the delegation are contained in annexes I, III and IV.

2. The delegation met with the President; the Prime Minister; the Speaker of Parliament; the Minister for Foreign Affairs; the Ministers of Defence, Justice, Administration Reform, Economy, Social Solidarity, Health, Education, Culture, Youth and Sports, and Veterans' Affairs; the Secretary of State for International Cooperation; and the General Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces. It also held meetings with the diplomatic community, the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS), the United Nations country team, the National Steering Committee, the National Electoral Commission, civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, and political parties. The content of the meetings are contained in annex II.

3. The delegation visited several sites in and outside of Bissau, which illustrated some of the peacebuilding challenges faced by the country. These sites included a mine-clearance project in Bissau; a women's group agricultural project; a cashew nut processing plant; the electrical power plants in Bissau and Bafata; military barracks in Bissau and in Canchungo; a bridge construction area in Porto São Vincente; the premises of the judiciary police and the prison in Bissau; and a hospital in Canchungo.

4. The members of the delegation wish to express their appreciation to the Government of Guinea-Bissau and the United Nations team on the ground for their support and assistance during the visit.

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II. Assessment

5. The meetings with various interlocutors were instrumental for the delegation to gain a better understanding of the current situation and to offer recommendations for the engagement of the Commission in developing an integrated peacebuilding strategy. Many problems faced by Guinea-Bissau stemmed from the prevailing institutional fragility of the State, constraining the Government from effectively managing key aspects of public, political, security and development policies and from delivering basic public services to the population. That situation had led to difficulties in implementing policies and programmes that could allow much needed political stability and economic recovery.

6. There was a vicious cycle in which the absence of responses to the most elementary needs of the population set the conditions for political instability, which in turn increased the vulnerability of the already fragile State. The consolidation of civilian rule was viewed by the delegation as one of the most important indicators of successful peacebuilding in the country. Consequently, the delegation believed that the country needed political stability and a strong commitment to continuing the reforms in the economic, social and political spheres as a way of guaranteeing sustainable peace, sustained growth and development.

7. The delegation found that the Government had high expectations regarding the Commission and hoped its engagement with the Commission would bring tangible results. From a political point of view, the Commission could contribute to ensuring greater stability, while it consolidated its stance as a reliable intermediary between the Government and its bilateral and international partners.

8. The delegation was of the view that the process of national reconciliation would be greatly enhanced if the key challenges were properly addressed with a strong political will among the leaders of the country and the support of the international community. Similarly, the delegation recognized the need to boost the country's efforts in capacity-building, in particular institutional capacity-building, translating the Government's political commitment to the peacebuilding efforts into concrete actions.

9. In the light of the increased attention currently being given to the country, as well as the likely increase in donor activity, the delegation stressed the need to improve donor coordination mechanisms to allow for better coordination of assistance by the international community and other stakeholders in supporting the country in its peacebuilding efforts. The establishment of an integrated peacebuilding strategy should strengthen coordination among various actors on the ground, by avoiding a duplication of efforts, thus creating synergies and mobilizing additional resources.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

10. The delegation identified, through its interactions with the Government, the following key areas for priority attention: elections; security sector reform; rule of law and the fight against drug trafficking; illegal migration and other forms of transnational organized criminal activities; public administration reform; reactivation of the economy; and rebuilding of the infrastructure, in particular in the energy sector.

11. Given the urgency and magnitude of many of the problems faced by Guinea-Bissau, the delegation concluded that the peacebuilding strategy should be based on a two-track approach, combining strategic planning with quick-impact projects. In this connection, it was reasonable that urgency, importance and value-added be the criteria for selection of quick-win projects. At the same time, the delegation recognized that the following criteria for assistance would also be useful: (a) contribution to promoting stability; (b) contribution to sustained socio-economic growth and development to enable the country to stand on its own feet; and (c) contribution to job creation.

Elections

12. The date for the forthcoming parliamentary elections had been set for 16 November 2008. Most interlocutors agreed that preparations for the elections were lagging behind, notably with respect to the national census, voter registration and the civic education campaign. The rainy season, which had already started and would end just before the elections, could further complicate the preparations for the process. A major potential constraint to holding the elections, however, was the lack of financial support for the preparations and holding of the elections. Financial assistance was needed to pay the salary arrears from the previous elections and to pay for the preparations for the November elections. The total budget for the 2008 elections amounted to $8.677 million, comprising $2.67 million for voter registration; $4.23 million for costs covered by the National Electoral Commission; and $1.76 million for electoral arrears. Out of that sum, Government sovereignty costs (salaries, arrears and diaspora voter registration) amounted to $4.320 million.

13. The Peacebuilding Commission could play an important role in galvanizing bilateral and international partners and in mobilizing additional resources to fill the funding gap; and UNOGBIS could play a role in assisting in the organization of sensitization campaigns, which could provide the opportunity for a meaningful political dialogue involving all political forces in Guinea-Bissau. The possibility of extending in due time an invitation to external elections observers was also raised. It was felt that the Guinea-Bissau configuration could hold a specific meeting to discuss the issue of the elections.

Security sector reform

14. The delegation held a separate meeting with the Ministers of Defence and Justice on the ongoing security sector reform plan. The Ministers emphasized that the Government's priorities for security sector reform included restructuring and modernization of the current security forces. The continued subordination of the military to civilian control and the Government's commitment to reduce the size of the armed forces were considered as some of the most important aspects of peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau.

15. The restructuring of the security forces would lead to an army size appropriate to the needs and means of the country. That size was estimated to be around 3,500 soldiers, excluding the paramilitary forces and the police (judiciary police and border patrol). The census of the country's security forces had been concluded and the results would be made public after they had been analysed by the relevant

authorities.[1] Those demobilized as part of the restructuring would need to be provided with alternative economic activities, including the possible use of microcredit instruments.

16. As part of the modernization of the security forces, an immediate priority was to address their living conditions. A visit to the barracks in Bissau and Bafata gave the delegation a better appreciation for the poor living conditions in the barracks and of the urgent need to address them.

17. Next month, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations would conduct a full mapping exercise of the security sector reform activities under way in Guinea-Bissau, followed by an assessment mission to the country, with a special focus on the criminal and justice system. At the same time, there was recognition that the European Commission/European Union was providing considerable support in that area, both in the short and the medium to long term.

18. The delegation was of the view that the successful implementation of the Government's security sector reform plan was crucial to the country's stability. The delegation stressed that further efforts should be made to support the Government in pushing through its reforms in that sector and that the Commission might consider specific areas where it could play a value-added role.

Rule of law and combating drug trafficking, illegal migration and other forms of transnational organized criminal activities

19. The growing problem of drug trafficking and transnational organized crime in Guinea-Bissau was closely linked to the need to reform the security forces. The country's weak capacity to control its isolated and dispersed islands, maritime borders and airspace had made it easy for drug traffickers to infiltrate the country and establish transit bases for drugs on their way from South America to Europe. Other forms of transnational illegal activities, including illegal migration, had taken advantage of the weak and ineffective security forces.

20. The delegation believed that addressing the shortcomings in the country's security forces would greatly reduce illegal activities. As part of that effort, the delegation also emphasized the need to strengthen the country's judicial system, including the judiciary police and the country's detention facilities. Ongoing efforts by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime were acknowledged as an important basis for further complementary action on the part of the international community. All efforts to address drug trafficking and related crimes should include a regional perspective, given the transnational nature of the challenges in that area.

Reform of public administration

21. Public administration reform was one of the key priorities of the Government. The Government's public sector reform programme had three components: enhancement of the professional competence of the public administration through training and capacity-building; improvement of public finance management; and improvement of public sector systems and procedures.

[1] Since the completion of the mission, Government authorities have announced the results of the census. The military forces are composed of 4,483 personnel. There is a relatively large proportion of high-ranking officers.

22. A lack of adequate capacity had hindered the Government's ability to deliver basic social services, while the large size of its public administration had created difficulties in paying salaries to civil servants. Clearing the backlog of salary arrears was as an indispensable step in public sector reform.

23. The modernization and strengthening of the public sector required a substantial increase in the current fiscal base, which in turn depended upon an effective process of reactivation of the economy and the creation of a business-friendly environment.

Energy

24. The Government faced an energy crisis. Not a single generator was working properly at the electric power plant in Bissau. The current output was provided by three leased generators, which only provided a minimal amount of electricity. Total production of energy reached 2.5 megawatts, while the current demand amounted to 20 megawatts, exclusively for the capital.

25. In a meeting with the World Bank and other stakeholders engaged in the energy sector, the importance of Private investment and private-public partnerships in the energy sector was stressed. It was pointed out, however, that, while such an approach was legally possible, Guinea-Bissau needed to improve the current regulatory framework, based on the principles of transparency and efficiency. A project was being developed to exploit natural and hydropower through the construction of a dam on the Gambia River, with the support of the European Union and the African Development Bank. Two round tables had been held and had raised 65 per cent of the funds needed for the project, which amounted to a total of €1 billion. The project could start in 2008-2009 and could be finished within four to five years. The expected contribution of Guinea-Bissau to the regional project would amount to €8 million. Once completed, the project would only provide the energy needed for the short and medium term. Since demand would rise in the rest of the city and the country, however, additional sources of energy would have to be identified.

26. The World Bank and the European Commission were also funding a master plan to identify and facilitate partnerships with additional partners and stakeholders. The European Commission was investing in domestic and alternative sources of energy through a regional project. The total cost of the strategy and the master plan amounted to €29 million. The European Commission was providing €4 million for a pumping system with solar energy and an additional €3 million for a water treatment facility powered by solar energy.

27. The delegation recognized that, while the lack of energy in Bissau and the total absence of energy in the rest of the country was seriously hampering the country's economic development, numerous ongoing and planned activities were aimed at addressing those shortcomings. It was necessary to improve distribution services so as to ensure that the electricity produced in Bissau was adequately monitored and controlled against misuse and diversion.

Reactivation of the economy and social areas

28. In spite of the huge challenges, Guinea-Bissau was a country with great economic potential, especially in the agriculture and fisheries sectors. To attract

investment, both local and international, however, the Government would need to overcome a number of obstacles, notably in the area of economic governance, as well as improve legal and financial frameworks. The reactivation of the economy called for an effective reform of the public sector, combined with measures to diversify and add value to local products. Such an effort necessarily involved dealing with the infrastructure bottlenecks, creating an enabling environment for business and providing capacity-building for human resources. Sustained support from the international community to match Government efforts would enable the country to embark on a path of stability, recovery and development.

29. A well-functioning economy would allow for an enhanced fiscal base, which in turn could strengthen the structure of the State and create the conditions for the Government to address the manifold needs of the population in the social areas. Many interlocutors reiterated the importance of adequate health and education services for the maintenance of peace in the long term.

30. As part of the effort to reactivate the economy, Government officials requested the support of the Commission to ensure that Guinea-Bissau was accorded debt relief on more generous conditions, taking into account its post-conflict situation. Such debt relief would enable the country to devote more resources to infrastructure and poverty reduction programmes.

Annex I

Purposes of the mission and key message

Purposes of the mission

1. The purposes of the mission were:

(a) To engage with the Government of Guinea-Bissau and other key stakeholders;

(b) To discuss with the Government and other stakeholders the Government's main priorities, challenges and risks for peacebuilding in the country, the actions being undertaken by the Government to address those challenges and the nature and scope of international support needed by the country;

(c) To visit the sites of ongoing projects in and outside of Bissau that were relevant to peacebuilding in the country; and

(d) To exchange views on the activities of the Peacebuilding Fund and on the establishment of the National Steering Committee.

Key message

2. The delegation stressed the importance of coordination and partnership between all stakeholders; and the importance of making progress on the strategic framework for peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau as the tool for long-term engagement between the Government and all relevant stakeholders, based on the principles of national ownership, mutual accountability, sustained engagement and inclusiveness. It further explained the mandate and processes of the Peacebuilding Commission and its interrelation with the Peacebuilding Fund process, the importance of continuity and stability in Guinea-Bissau and the Government's sustained commitment to the process.

Annex II

Content of meetings

Government ministers and senior officials

1. The delegation met with the following: the Ministers of Defence, Justice, Administration Reform, Economy, Social Solidarity, Health, Education, Culture, Youth and Sports, and Veterans' Affairs, and the Secretary of State for International Cooperation.

2. The Government Ministers expressed their gratitude for the engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission with Guinea-Bissau and thanked the partners for their sustained commitment over the years. They expressed their support for the work of the Commission, in particular its Guinea-Bissau configuration. They also expressed their full confidence in the Chairperson of the Guinea-Bissau configuration. The Ministers expressed satisfaction with the Secretary-General's decision to declare Guinea-Bissau eligible for support from the Peacebuilding Fund, which served as an additional motivation for the Government and impetus for the engagement between the Commission and the Government of Guinea-Bissau. The Ministers also stressed their political will and continued commitment to work together with all the partners.

3. The Ministers stated that the Government was focusing on a number of peacebuilding priority areas, including the forthcoming legislative elections, set to take place on 16 November; the reform of the security sector, the reform of the public administration sector, the energy sector, and drug trafficking and other transnational organized crime, such as human trafficking and terrorism. While other issues of concern were raised, the aforementioned areas were accorded very high priority by the Ministers.

4. Preparations for the November elections had been delayed as a result of a funding gap and a delayed response on the part of the various stakeholders, including a delay in the finalization of the consensual budget. Neither the national census, nor voter registration had started yet. The Government's decision to opt for a biometric system meant that efforts would need to be intensified to acquire the necessary equipment and deploy it for the registration well in advance of the elections. If voter registration was not completed on time, the 2005 voter registry would have to be used. Bilateral and multilateral partners had been approached to help with the funding of the elections, to little avail. A copy of the electoral budget was presented to the delegation for information. The Government had allocated 1.9 billion CFA francs to contribute to the budgetary gap, which included outstanding salary arrears and the census of the Bissau-Guinean diaspora. A total of 0.6 billion CFA francs had already been included in the 2008 budget. The Government's sovereignty costs amounted to $4.320 million, although it was unclear how it intended to fund that amount.

5. The delegation was assured that the Parliament would continue its regular activities after the end of its mandate on 21 April. According to Government representatives, the Parliament would continue its work through its permanent commissions, notwithstanding the resolution adopted by Parliament extending its own mandate until the holding of the November elections. The delegation

emphasized the need to respect constitutional procedures as a necessary condition for stability and an orderly political process.[a]

6. Regarding security sector reform, the Ministers clarified that it included a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration component and that selection criteria for members of the security forces to be included in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme had been identified. The need to ensure alternative economic activities for the military to be demobilized was also much emphasized. The army had conducted a census that would provide greater clarity in terms of the size of the army. The findings of the census and the possible adjustments of the Government's security sector reform plan would be shared with the international community in due course.

7. In the area of economic development, the Ministers emphasized the need to urgently address the deficiencies in the energy sector. The point was made that there could be no development without energy. Only a few neighbourhoods in Bissau currently had access to electricity, while the rest of the country relied heavily on small generators. Another area that required immediate attention was agriculture, which, if developed, could provide employment for the youth and sustainable food security. The country was currently an importer of basic food items. Resources were needed to support the agricultural sector. The need to strengthen capacities through training, including for demobilized soldiers, was stressed.

8. The Ministers emphasized that the Government was actively engaged in the fight against international organized crime, in particular drug trafficking, despite its very limited capacities to control its land territory, its maritime borders and air space. Those constraints made the country particularly vulnerable to transnational organized crime, including drug trafficking, human trafficking and illegal migration, terrorism and trafficking in small arms and light weapons. While it was the State's responsibility to guarantee the control of its borders and the safety of its territory, it was also noted that that alone would not help address those problems, which needed to be tackled at the regional and subregional levels. A regional conference on combating drug trafficking was expected to be held later in the year, under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States.

9. According to the Ministers, the measures the Government had deployed against drug traffickers, although limited, had led to a dramatic decrease in the number of potential traffickers in the country. The Government could ascertain that the overall number of illegal landings had decreased and that there had been no illegal landings at the country's main landing strips (Bissau, Bubaque and Cufar). One of the most effective measures had been to set up physical obstacles on the landing strips. A limited level of military presence had also been deployed in and around the airports.

10. Problems with illegal migration were due to the geography of the country, which had around 90 islands, out of which only 17 were inhabited. Some of those that were not inhabited and were difficult to access were being used for illegal migration.

[a] Subsequent to the departure of the delegation, the National Parliament adopted a resolution amounting to a revision of the constitution, essentially extending the Parliament's mandate until elections could be held in November.

11. The threat of terrorism had come to light more prominently with the deportation to Mauritania of the alleged murderers of the French tourists. One of the two extradited Mauritanians spoke Creole, indicating that he had been in the country long enough to learn the language. The Government had not shown complacency when facing the situation regarding the terrorists, despite its very limited resources. The Government expressed concern that the terrorists, who had committed their acts far away from Bissau, had not been caught before reaching the country. A meeting was expected to be held soon in Dakar on the regional and subregional dimension of the terrorist threat.

12. In that context, the Minister of Justice and the Director of the Judiciary Police outlined their priorities, which included improvement of the existing infrastructure, bringing the quality of services up to international standards and pursuing partnerships with bilateral and multilateral partners. The Government lacked the financial means to implement its programme in that sector. The authorities of the country were hampered in their fight against organized crime, notably drug trafficking, by the absence of appropriate facilities, such as prisons, and the lack of appropriate legal human resources, such as magistrates. There was an urgent need to address those immediate needs in the infrastructure to reduce impunity and allow for magistrates to conduct their work. Magistrates were currently reluctant to hand out sentences for lack of appropriate prison facilities.

13. The judiciary police was not in a position to move into their new facilities because the facilities had not yet been reconfigured for their future function. The move would allow the old facilities to be improved and the current prison to be enlarged and brought up to international standards. The judiciary police did not have the means to purchase furniture and office equipment for the new facilities.

14. The Government had made some progress towards national reconciliation. One of the elements of the process was the draft amnesty law, which had been submitted to the President for promulgation. The Government was of the view that the improvement of the socio-economic situation in the country would contribute to further national reconciliation. In that regard, the Government's priorities were the creation of wealth, the creation of jobs and the fight against illiteracy. If progress could be made on those three fronts, socio-economic stability could be achieved. In particular, the agricultural sector needed to be supported since it would allow for the creation of many jobs.

15. The Minister of Finance indicated that all domestic revenues in the country were directed towards payment of the salaries of civil servants, leaving no resources for public investments. While acknowledging the need to pursue public sector reform, he noticed that the diversification of the economy and the consequent expansion of the revenue base were indispensable steps. The Minister of Finance called attention to the high levels of indebtedness of Guinea-Bissau and asked for the support of the Commission in speeding up the process that would make the country benefit from the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative.

Diplomatic community and briefing by the European Union on the security sector reform European security and defence policy mission

16. The diplomatic community highlighted a number of challenges facing the country, including the lack of a critical mass of technical expertise in various fields,

the need to implement quickly the country's security sector reform and the upcoming elections.

17. With respect to the end of the mandate of the Parliament, the diplomatic community stressed the importance of making sure that a solution be found, giving due respect to the law and the constitution.

18. The importance of strengthened donor coordination was highlighted. It was recognized, however, that the proper functioning of such a mechanism might be hampered by the lack of adequate staff capacities in some of the local embassies and institutions. The international partners group, coordinated by the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau, should try to hold more frequent meetings. A suggestion was also made to use the National Steering Committee, which had already been established.

19. The delegation stressed that the Peacebuilding Commission was not an additional donor or provider of funds, but rather a mechanism to assess the needs of the country and to help address them by developing a strategic framework for peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau.

20. France, which currently held the local presidency of the European Union in Bissau, made a presentation to the delegation on the upcoming security sector reform European security and defence policy mission. In addition, the European Commission had set aside €7.7 million for the reintegration and reinsertion of demobilized combatants. Out of that total, €4 million were earmarked for reinsertion, €1.2 million for former combatants and €0.5 million for cross-cutting measures. The remainder would cover technical and administrative costs. The completion of the census of the armed forces would provide a more accurate picture of the real needs and of the importance of the problem.

Civil society organizations and the private sector

21. The delegation held separate meetings with civil society organizations representing, among others, women, youth and former combatants, and representatives of the private sector and it stressed the crucial role of civil society in the definition and implementation of an integrated peacebuilding strategy. The women's organizations regretted the lack of consideration given to women's groups by the Government and stressed that women were particularly disadvantaged in the Bissau-Guinean society. Illiteracy rates were higher among women, as were the rates of HIV-AIDS infections. Infant and maternal mortality rates were very high, and women were more often victims of gender-based violence, human rights abuses and traditional practices.

22. In the workplace, women were underprivileged and underrepresented and those who worked were hired at lower levels and with lower salaries than men. Women's organizations recommended that women be represented at all levels of decision-making, that they be included in the National Steering Committee and that gender issues be included in all areas of the Government's work. It was also recommended that special attention be paid to gender in the area of capacity-building.

23. Non-governmental organization representatives indicated that the judiciary was not able to effectively combat corruption and impunity and was not able to provide basic services to the population, which had led elements of the population to

take justice into their own hands. Political instability was highlighted as a major constraint.

24. Civil society organizations were also concerned about illegal migration, drug trafficking, juvenile delinquency and youth unemployment. In the latter case, the Government had adopted in December 2007 a plan of action for youth, which had not yet been implemented. The plan of action reflected the specific needs of the youth in all sectors, including in the areas of education, training and employment generating activities, youth participation in decision-making, public administration and security sector reform.

25. With respect to security sector reform, the non-governmental organizations stressed the importance of ensuring a reform with dignity, which would include moral recognition and material and financial security for demobilized and retired soldiers. They feared that the way the reform was being conducted would not achieve the desired result and would fail as it had in all previous attempts. To avoid a repetition of mistakes associated with previous security sector reforms, non-governmental organizations suggested that a pilot project be conducted in the area of security sector reform, if successful, it could be applied to the rest of the army.

26. The representatives of the private sector indicated that the merger of the two chambers of commerce in Guinea-Bissau had enhanced the status and role of the private sector in the country. They noted that the private sector was increasingly looked upon as the engine of growth and the source of job creation in the country and hoped that the Peacebuilding Commission would help the private sector to play those roles effectively.

27. The representatives highlighted several constraints and challenges that impeded the growth and development of the private sector in the country. One of the major challenges lay in the banking and finance sector. There were few banks in the country and they focused mainly on short-term commercial lending, making it very difficult for private firms to obtain loans for medium- to long-term investments. To overcome that problem, Guinea-Bissau needed to establish a development bank that would lend to entrepreneurs with medium- to long-term investment horizons.

28. Another major constraint to private sector development was the lack of an adequate and reliable energy supply, which had not only stifled industrial and commercial production but had also discouraged private investment in many sectors of the economy. Overcoming the constraint of an inadequate energy supply required a composite of measures, including rehabilitating existing power plants; encouraging private sector participation in the generation, transmission and distribution of power; diversifying the sources of energy supply to encompass use of solar panels and of cashew nut shells to produce electricity; and improving the legal and regulatory framework for the power sector.

29. Other important constraints identified as hindering the growth of the private sector included the weakness of the judicial system and overall rule of law guarantees, the high air and maritime transport costs, unreliable communications, lack of effective policy in support of the agriculture sector and the absence of supportive public policies and public institutions for business.

National Steering Committee[b]

30. The co-Chairs of the National Steering Committee — the Minister in the Presidency, representing the Government of Guinea-Bissau, and the Representative of the Secretary-General, representing the United Nations — offered their perspectives on the role of the Committee. They emphasized that the work of the Committee would be guided by the principles of national ownership, partnership and mutual accountability and that decisions would reflect the priorities and challenges for peacebuilding, as set by the Government of Guinea-Bissau. In doing so, the Committee would collaborate with all the national stakeholders that were engaged in dialogue with the Peacebuilding Commission.

31. The co-Chairs expressed confidence that the Committee's work would support the joint efforts of the Government and the Peacebuilding Commission to consolidate peacebuilding in the country. They indicated that a meeting of the Committee would be held within a week to examine and adopt its terms of reference and rules of procedure.

32. The members of the delegation observed that the Committee was an important tool in carrying out the work of the Commission in the field. The main tasks of the Committee included contributing to the definition of the priorities for peacebuilding; assessment of the projects submitted for funding to ensure that they fit with the country's peacebuilding priorities; and deepening consultations with various stakeholders engaged in the peacebuilding process in the country. It was stressed that an inclusive approach was essential to the Committee's functioning and effectiveness, in particular ensuring active civil society participation in the Committee's decision-making and improved gender balance in representation and participation. Such an inclusive approach was considered vital to ensuring the transparency of and trust in the work of the Committee.

Political parties

33. The delegation canvassed the views of the country's political parties on the current political situation, the electoral preparation, the priorities for peacebuilding and their expectations from the Peacebuilding Commission process. The delegation met the representatives of the two minority parties (see annex III), as well as with the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde, the United Social Democratic Party and the Party for Social Renewal, which formed the coalition Government.

34. Minority leaders focused their intervention on the situation arising from the adoption of a resolution on the prolongation of the mandate of the Parliament. The leaders of the minority parties stressed the importance of finding a solution in

[b] In addition to the co-chairs, the National Steering Committee is composed of:
(a) Government representatives (5): Minister of Defence; Minister of Public Administration; Minister of Economy and Regional Integration; Secretary of State for International Cooperation; Representative of the Presidency of the Republic;
(b) Bilateral partners (5): Brazil, China, Portugal, South Africa, Spain;
(c) Multilateral partners (5): United Nations Development Programme Resident Representative/United Nations Resident Coordinator, European Commission, Economic Community of West African States, World Bank, African Development Bank;
(d) Civil society and the private sector (3): two representatives of civil society and one representative of the joint Chamber of Commerce.

accordance with the law. The resolution passed in Parliament to extend their mandate was unconstitutional. Minority leaders stressed that the current tranquillity was precarious.

35. The coalition parties that formed the Government stressed the urgency of receiving substantial support from the international community for the upcoming elections. They agreed with the priorities established by the Government, notably on security sector reform, youth, institution-building and the rehabilitation of the existing infrastructure. Other Government priorities included payment of salary arrears, education, food security, the health sector, reform of the public administration sector, maritime resource control and transportation problems.

36. The Government parties were of the view that their decision to adopt a resolution in Parliament extending their mandate until the new elections were held was the best solution to the problem and provided continuity in the work of the Parliament. However, one of the parties regretted that there had not been sufficient consultations among the parties before the resolution had been tabled for a vote. Ultimately, the Supreme Court would have to decide, should problems arise as a result of the resolution adopted by Parliament.

37. One of the Government parties noted that all the previous Governments of Guinea-Bissau had not been able to exercise enough civilian control and oversight over the military and security forces, which systematically interfered in the country's political life, because of the legacy of their leadership role in the liberation struggle. That remark echoed similar remarks made by the civil society representatives.

Other national institutions

38. The President of the National Electoral Commission welcomed the decision by the President of the Republic to set the date of the elections for 16 November 2008, which would coincide with the end of the rainy season. The National Electoral Commission was concerned about the delay in starting the national census and updating the national voter registry. The delays could result in the Government's having to use the data available from the last census dating back to 2005. The National Electoral Commission stressed that it was the Government's responsibility to act as quickly as possible.

39. The National Electoral Commission also noted the delays in starting the civic education programme, which were due in part to the funding gap for the elections in general. Further concerns were expressed with regard to the salary arrears, dating back to the 1999, 2004 and 2005 elections. A separate census needed to be organized for the Bissau-Guinean diaspora, estimated at around 144,000. Elections for the diaspora were conducted through the country's consulates abroad. Those issues needed to be addressed as a matter of priority.

40. The delegation stressed the need for the National Electoral Commission to request formally, and in due time, the participation of international observers since the date of the elections had been set.

41. The delegation held a meeting with General Tagme Na Waie, Army Chief of Staff, who stressed the army's commitment to the Government's security sector reform plan, which he hoped would lead to sustainable peace in the country and later to development. He expressed confidence that the country was on the right

path, as evidenced by the increased number of foreigners visiting the country, which showed a restoration of confidence by the international community. The recently conducted army census would shed light on the actual size of the army. General Tagme stressed the need to ensure a dignified reform, as opposed to the previous attempts. The term "dignified reform" was used to refer to providing adequate material and financial benefits to retired or demobilized soldiers, without which soldiers would not go home or demobilize.

42. General Tagme regretted that the army was not in a position to play its role of maintaining peace in the country; over the past 20 years, it had witnessed a slow decline in its professional competence and a lack of proper equipment. The army was not able to contribute to the country's development, to the country's protection or to the country's fight against drug trafficking and other forms of transnational organized crime. He nevertheless reiterated the resolve of the military to continue to be subordinate to civil power and rejected any possibility of intervening in the political arena.

Prime Minister

43. The delegation thanked the Prime Minster for the support that the Government of Guinea-Bissau and he, in particular, had provided to the delegation since its arrival. The members of delegation emphasized that the visit had enabled them to better understand the situation in the country and afforded them an opportunity to engage with the various stakeholders in identifying the challenges confronting the Government and people of Guinea-Bissau. The discussions had also yielded important insights on the priorities for peacebuilding, notably security sector reforms, support for strengthening the institutional capacity of the justice sector, provision of an adequate and reliable supply of energy, public sector reforms and the combating of drug trafficking.

44. It was explained that financial support from "Window one" of the Peacebuilding Fund, which was available to countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, would be given in two tranches: the first to be provided for the "quick win" projects that the Government had already submitted; and the second to be provided after the adoption of the strategic framework for peacebuilding with Guinea-Bissau.

45. The members emphasized that the Peacebuilding Commission was committed to supporting the Government's peacebuilding efforts. The success of those efforts would depend crucially on fostering political stability in the country, enhancing the national ownership of the development process, promoting international partnership in support of national efforts and pursuing an inclusive consultative process that would allow all key stakeholders to participate in the development of an integrated peacebuilding strategy. The delegation explained that such a strategy would govern the engagement between the Government of Guinea-Bissau and the Commission.

46. In his response, the Prime Minister said that the government attached great importance to the visit of the Peacebuilding Commission delegation. He highlighted the country's peacebuilding priorities, including the promotion of political stability, organizing free and fair elections, combating drug trafficking, undertaking security sector reforms, pursuing public sector reforms and increasing the energy supply. The Government was aware of its dependence on international support and partnership in order to make significant progress in those priorities. The decision to engage with

the Peacebuilding Commission reflected the deeply felt need to mobilize international partnerships for Guinea-Bissau's development efforts.

47. The Prime Minister noted that the Government required international support in many areas. He warned that the Government would not be able to finance the forthcoming elections without external financial assistance. He also called attention to the fact that the Government owed three categories of salary arrears: to the staff of the electoral commission; to the military; and to other public sector workers. Paying those arrears would contribute greatly to reducing social and political tensions and to fostering national reconciliation. He stressed that, although the fiscal stabilization programme had considerably improved the fiscal situation, Government revenues had remained insufficient to cover the recurrent public expenditures. In those circumstances, international support was essential and he hoped that engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission would help in that effort.

President

48. The President expressed satisfaction with the visit to Guinea-Bissau of the high-level delegation of the Peacebuilding Commission. He stressed the importance of the delegation's being able to witness first-hand the consequences of the 1998-1999 conflict and the challenges the country was currently facing in rebuilding and sustaining peace. The needs of the country were currently 10 times higher than they had been before the 1998-1999 conflict. Whereas the country used to contribute actively to peacekeeping operations in the past, it was currently reduced to requesting support from the international community even to hold elections.

49. The 2006 Geneva round table had been a disappointment to the country. Many promises had been made, but only a few had come through. There continued to be problems relating to the barracks and territorial border and airspace control. Drug trafficking and illegal migration were additional problems the country had to cope with.

50. The President stressed the importance of the fact that a date had been set for parliamentary elections (16 November). While 21 April constituted the end of the Parliament's mandate, the President said that he would not dissolve the Parliament, which would continue its work in the permanent technical commissions, nor would he dismiss the Government.

Annex III

Programme of the mission of the Peacebuilding Commission to Guinea-Bissau

6-11 April 2008

Sunday, 6 April

	Arrival in Bissau
Followed by	Quick Press Briefing

Monday, 7 April

0800-0830	Meeting with the Representative of the Secretary-General, Shola Omoregie and the United Nations United Nations Development Programme Resident Representative/United Nations Resident Coordinator, Giuseppina Mazza
0830-1000	Meeting with the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau and the United Nations country team
1130-1330	Meeting with officials of the Government (Minister of Defence, Minister of the Interior, Minister of Justice, Minister of Administration Reform, Minister of Economy, Minister of Finance, Minister of Social Solidarity, Minister of Health, Minister of Education, Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports, Minister of Veterans, Secretary of State for International Cooperation)
1330-1500	Lunch
1500-1630	Meeting with diplomatic missions
1645-1800	Presentation by France (local European Union Presidency) to Peacebuilding Commission delegation on the European Union security sector reform European security and defence policy mission
1900-2000	National Steering Committee: official swearing-in ceremony

Tuesday, 8 April

0830-0930	Visit to mine action project, Bissau
1000-1100	Visit to a women's group agricultural project, Bissau
1115-1145	Visit to the electrical power station, Bissau
1200-1245	Visit to the Port of Bissau
1300-1430	Lunch (and meeting with the Minister of Finance)
1430-1615	Meeting with the Minister of Defence and Minister of Justice
1630-1740	Visit to the Offices of the National Electoral Commission
1750-2015	Meeting with civil society

Wednesday, 9 April

0800-0830	Meeting with minority political parties with parliamentary seats (União Eleitoral, Aliança Popular Unida)
0835-0900	Meeting with the leader of the United Social Democratic Party
0905-0930	Meeting with the leader of the Party for Social Renewal
0935-1000	Meeting with the leaders of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde
1100-1130	Meeting with General Tagme Na Waie, Chief of General Armed Forces Staff
1130-1230	Visit to Bissau military barracks
1245-1300	Visit to judiciary police premises/prison in Bissau and meeting with the Director of the Judiciary Police
1300-1400	Lunch
1415-1545	Visit to a cashew project in Bissau
1545	Departure for Porto de São Vicente and Canchungo
1615-1645	Porto de São Vicente: visit to a bridge and the medical unit of the faculty of Bula
1715-1830	Canchungo: visit to various projects (military barracks, hospital, SOS Children's Villages)
1845	Departure for Bissau

Thursday, 10 April

0800	Departure for Tche-Tche, Gabú, Bafatá: full day visit
1130-1200	Inspection visit to Tche-Tche crossing
1430-1600	Lunch co-hosted by the Representative of the Secretary-General, and the United Nations Development Programme Resident Representative/United Nations Resident Coordinator
1610	Departure for Bissau
1815-1900	Energy meeting with Government representatives and partners
2030	Dinner hosted by the Prime Minister, Martinho Dafa Cabi

Friday, 11 April

0800-0845	Meeting with the Minister of Justice, Carmelita Pires, and the Director of the Judiciary Police, Lucinda Barbosa
0850-0920	Meeting with the private sector (Chamber of Commerce)
0930-1000	Meeting with the National Steering Committee, followed by a meeting with the Minister for Foreign Affairs

1015-1045	Meeting with the Prime Minister
1100-1130	Meeting with the Speaker of Parliament, Francisco Benante
1230-1345	Meeting with the President of the Republic, General João Bernardo Vieira
1430-1500	Press Conference
1500-1530	Debriefing with Representative of the Secretary-General and the United Nations Development Programme Resident Representative/United Nations Resident Coordinator
1555	Departure

Annex IV

Members of the delegation

Peacebuilding Commission delegation

Maria Luiza R. Viotti, Permanent Representative, Chairperson of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (Brazil)

Alfredo Cabral, Permanent Representative (Guinea-Bissau)

Jean-Marc Hoscheit, Permanent Representative (Luxembourg)

João Manuel Guerra Salgueiro, Permanent Representative (Portugal)

Martin Palouš, Permanent Representative (Czech Republic)

Tamasa Baba Jarra, Deputy Permanent Representative (the Gambia)

Jiro Kodera, Ambassador (Japan)

Lawrence Akindele, Minister, Chargé d'affaires a.i. (Nigeria)

Tete Antonio, Minister Counsellor (Angola)

Jorge Alejandro Tagle Canelo, Counsellor (Chile)

Sifana Ibsen Koné, Second Counsellor (Burkina Faso)

Alexandre Nina, First Secretary (Brazil)

Kazuhide Kuroda, Senior Social Development Specialist (World Bank)

Ejeviome Eloho Otobo, Director of Strategic Planning and Deputy Head (Peacebuilding Support Office)

Philip Helminger, Political Affairs Officer, Strategic Planning (Peacebuilding Support Office)

Additional representatives based in the country

Jorge Geraldo Kadri, Ambassador of Brazil to Guinea-Bissau

Vladimir Petukhov, Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Guinea-Bissau

Karl Rawert, acting Head of Delegation (European Commission)

Frederic Silva, Chargé d'affaires a.i. (Portugal)

Ximena Bartolomé Tocino, Secretary of Embassy (Spain)

Xue Feng, Attaché (China)

Caroline Bahnson (European Commission)

Carmen Maria Pereira, Liaison Officer (World Bank)